

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. – 10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) An optical meter that can determine when sample has been applied to the surface of a test strip inserted into it, said meter comprising:

(a) means for collecting reflectance data from a region of said meter occupied by a sample application location of said test strip when said test strip is present in said meter over a period of time ranging from a time prior to introduction of said test strip into said optical meter to a time after application of said sample to said sample application location, wherein said means comprises:

- (i) a light source for irradiating said region of said meter; and
- (ii) a detector for detecting reflected light from said region of said meter;

(b) means for comparing said reflectance data to a reference value to obtain a sample present signal; and

(c) means for actuating a fluid sample movement means of said test strip in response to said sample present signal.

12. (Original) The optical meter according to Claim 11, wherein said light source is a source of visible light.

13. (Original) The optical meter according to Claim 12, wherein said light has a wavelength ranging from about 550nm to 590nm.

14. (Original) The optical meter according to Claim 11, wherein said meter further comprises said test strip.

15. (Previously Presented) An optical meter that can determine when sample has been applied to the surface of a test strip inserted into it, said meter comprising:

(a) means for collecting reflectance data from a region of said meter occupied by a sample application location of said test strip when said test strip is present in said meter over a period of time ranging from a time prior to introduction of said test strip into said optical meter to a time after

application of said sample to said sample application location, wherein said means comprises:

- (i) a light source for irradiating said region of said meter with light of wavelength ranging from about 550 to 590nm; and
- (ii) a detector for detecting reflected light from said region of said meter;
- (b) means for comparing said reflectance data to a reference value to obtain a sample present signal; and
- (c) means for actuating a fluid sample movement means of said meter in response to said sample present signal.

16. (Original) The optical meter according to Claim 15, wherein said fluid movement means is a bladder depressing means.

17. (Original) The optical meter according to Claim 15, wherein said test strip is present in said meter.

18. (Original) The optical meter according to Claim 17, wherein said test strip is a non-porous test strip.

19. – 22. (Canceled)